

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Suspension)

of the Educator Certificate of)

Dawn M. Wheeler)

Certificate 215961)

ORDER OF SUSPENSION

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The South Carolina State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on July 13, 2005. On May 27, 2005, the Office of Teacher Certification served Dawn M. Wheeler a notice of her right to a hearing regarding the possible suspension of her South Carolina educator certificate by certified mail, return receipt requested, delivery restricted to addressee. Ms. Wheeler received the notice, as evidenced by the signed postal receipt bearing her signature. Ms. Wheeler did not request a hearing within the time frame specified in the notice letter. After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to suspend Ms. Wheeler's certificate for one year.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Wheeler is in her second year of participation in the alternative certificate program. She was employed during the 2004-05 school year with Spartanburg County School District Six (District) and was assigned to teach English at the Spartanburg County Alternative School. Ms. Wheeler was placed on administrative leave on March 9, 2005, after the District learned through media reports that on December 27, 2004, Ms. Wheeler had been charged with Driving Under the Influence, Hit and Run with Property Damage, and Driving in the Wrong Direction. Ms. Wheeler acknowledged her conduct and resigned on March 29, 2005, after being informed that her termination would be recommended.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The State Board may suspend the certificate of any person for unprofessional conduct. S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-25-150 and 160 (2004). The State Board finds that there is sufficient evidence supporting its conclusion that just cause exists to suspend Ms. Wheeler's certificate for one year, from July 13, 2005 until July 12, 2006. At the end of the suspension period, Ms. Wheeler may request reinstatement of her certificate by written request to the Office of Teacher Certification at the South Carolina Department of Education. If Ms. Wheeler requests reinstatement, she must pass a character and fitness review by the State Board.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: /S/ Joe Isaac for Paul M. Forrester

Paul M. Forrester, Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

July 13, 2005